

I want to be a Muslim but... Myths about Converting to Islam (Part III)

We finished Part 2 by mentioning that when a person converts to Islam all his previous sins, no matter how grave or small, are eliminated. The slate is clean, free from sin, shiny and white; this is a new beginning. However there are some people who may hesitate to accept Islam because they fear they will be unable to stay away from sin. We begin part 3 by discussing this topic.

7. I want to be Muslim but I know there are some sins I cannot stop doing.

If a person truly believes that there is no god but Allah, he or she should accept Islam without delay, even if they believe they will continue to sin. When a person is used to living a life unencumbered by any set of moral principles, Islam may at first seem like a set of rules and regulations that are almost impossible to fulfill. Muslims do not drink alcohol, Muslims do not eat pork, Muslim women must wear scarves, Muslims must pray five times every day. Men and women find themselves saying things like, "I could not possibly stop drinking", or "I would find it too difficult to pray every single day let alone five times".

The reality is however, that once a person has accepted that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah, and developed a relationship with Him the rules and regulations drift into insignificance. It is a slow process of wanting to please God. For some, accepting the guidelines for a happy life is a matter of days, even hours, for others it can be weeks, months, or even years. Every person's journey into Islam is different. It is important to remember that God forgives all sins. A believer can, by the mercy of God, be admitted to paradise no matter what sins he has committed. On the other hand, a non believer, one who worships something or someone other than the One True God, will be admitted to eternal Hellfire. Therefore given a choice between not accepting Islam altogether or being a Muslim who is sinning, the second choice is certainly much better.

8. I want to be a Muslim but I am afraid to inform others.

As we have stressed repeatedly there is nothing in the world that should prevent a person from embracing Islam. If one fears the reaction of others, such as his or her parents, siblings or friends, and feels that they are not ready to inform them, still they should convert and try to practice Islam in secret as much as they can. As time passes, and the connection with God is established, a person's faith will become stronger and they will know how to handle the situation better. In fact the new Muslim will almost certainly feel liberated and begin to feel the need to inform the whole world about the beauty of Islam.

In the meantime it is a good idea to slowly and subtly prepare your friends and family for the changes that will obviously take place. Perhaps one could begin to talk openly about God and religion in general, express an interest in other faiths or Islam in particular. When a person begins to practice Islam, which is in fact a way of life, those close to them often notice a difference. They will see a new found respect for them, the family and society in general; they will also see a change in demeanor often from anxious and unhappy to relaxed and contented.

Islam is a way of life and it's difficult to hide it for long. It is important to remember that when people learn of your conversion to Islam there will be a reaction. It will range from those that are happy and accepting, to those who feel upset and disappointed. Often those upset, with time get over it and begin to accept the change. And when they see many positive changes in you, they may actually begin to appreciate your conversion. One needs to stay strong, determined and know that God is with you.

Your words and experience may very well lead others to follow your example. Trust in God, learn all you can about your new found faith and let the light of Islam shine through your eyes.

9. I want to be a Muslim but do not know any Muslims

Some people learn about Islam from reading, others from watching the behavior of Muslims they see in their cities and towns, some even learn about Islam from programs on TV and for others, it is the sound of the call to prayer. Often people seek and find the beauty of Islam without ever meeting a Muslim. It simply is not necessary to know Muslims before accepting and converting to Islam.

Conversion to Islam is as easy as saying the words, I testify that there is no god but God and I testify that Muhammad is His messenger. The conversion does not have to be done in a mosque (Islamic center) and nor are witnesses needed for the conversion. These things however, are manifestations of the brotherhood of Islam and mark the beginning of a new faith with the moral and spiritual support of others. If there is no Islamic center nearby or Muslims to help, one can simply follow the procedure explained in the "How to convert to Islam and Become a Muslim".

Consequently after conversion it could be very helpful for the new Muslim to make contact with other Muslims. Members of your new spiritual family can be found by approaching local mosques and Islamic centers, or introducing yourself to the Muslim who lives down the street, catches the same bus, or works in the same company. However, even if a new Muslim is totally alone, he or she is connected to 1.6 billion other Muslims.

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By Aisha Stacey from <http://www.islamreligion.com>